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Addendum

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Programme questions: programme planning: programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997 (item 4 (a) (i))

Note by the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997

1. At its 15th meeting, on 15 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the note by the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997 (E/AC.51/1999/7).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the note and responded to questions raised during its consideration.

Discussion

3. The Committee noted the additional information provided at its request, on the status of 57 outputs carried over from the biennium 1994–1995 and further postponed during the biennium 1996–1997. In the absence of further justification warranting their continuation, those outputs had been recommended for termination in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997 (A/53/122, para. 22).

4. The departments concerned had communicated that 14 outputs had been implemented in 1997–1998, 12 would be implemented in 1999, 2 outputs had been further postponed to 2000 and 20 outputs were considered ongoing in accordance with legislative mandates. Nine

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outputs were recommended for termination and explanations were provided. The Secretariat promised to change the system of revision for termination.

5. Concern was expressed at the lack of resources during the biennium to implement the recommendations based on the study of the effect of racial discrimination in education of minority children, taking into account that it was a mandated activity that had been carried over for the last two bienniums.

6. In this context, concern was also expressed about the proposal to eliminate these activities, taking into account the fact that the General Assembly had decided to celebrate in the year 2001 the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and that this activity would form part of the preparation for the Conference. It was pointed out also that the relevant intergovernmental body should give its opinion on this proposal.

7. Concern was expressed that a lack of resources had led to the termination or the repeated postponement of outputs. The view was expressed that programmes should not be sacrificed for savings. Concern was also expressed that the views of intergovernmental bodies on the nine remaining outputs proposed for termination were not sufficiently clear. The Secretariat was requested to furnish the additional information.

8. The view was expressed that intergovernmental bodies should consider each proposal and report thereon to the General Assembly before taking action.

9. The view was expressed with regret that the resources requested by the Secretariat were not commensurate with the full implementation of mandates, as required in many General Assembly resolutions, and in this regard, the Secretariat was requested to comply fully with such resolutions.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee regretted that the opinion of relevant intergovernmental bodies on the proposal by the Secretary-General to delete some outputs, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998, had not been submitted.

11. The Committee noted the information provided. Recalling regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, it stressed the need for clear justification for termination of outputs.

12. The Committee noted with concern that, as indicated in the report, certain outputs had been postponed and others terminated owing to a lack of resources during the biennium.

13. The Committee noted the information provided and requested the Secretariat to ensure that future programme performance reports would provide clear justification and criteria for termination.